



## Using Our Gifts

By Carol Lopez

When Lucy Vasquez shared her personal story at our National Challenge Weekend, she began with a question. “Have I used my Holy Spirit gifts and spiritual gifts for God’s glory and the betterment of creation?”

“Unbeknownst to me at the time of my actions, I can say, yes, I have used my gifts!” she said, “My sincere prayer has always been, Lord, I do this for your glory and not for mine!”

Lucy has committed her life using her gifts to serve wherever God sees fit by “talking to God daily asking him to guide me to our next task.”

Throughout her life, Lucy has lived her faith daily. “I served in the third largest school district in California. I asked God to assign me to a school where I could make a difference. He answered my prayer by sending me to a school considered to be a high-risk, low socio-economic community

where the majority of adults were or had been imprisoned.”

For 13 years Lucy served the students and developed partnerships with 140 Fresno, California, businesses to assist in the formation of task forces to improve the community and academic environment. This effort successfully addressed the community’s below standard living conditions while also improving police protection, increasing the education of the students’ parents, and providing pro bono medical services.

When Lucy retired from the school district, she was recruited to manage a failing grant-funded, nonprofit mentoring program that served 400 high risk, fourth-grade elementary students. Lucy’s efforts in restructuring the program’s framework, adding best practices, and initiating peer and adult mentors resulted in significant

*Continued on page 5*

### INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

## Good and Faithful Stewards

*The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded for their own labor. For we are coworkers in God’s service, you are God’s field, God’s building. (1 Corinthians 3:8-9)*

We don’t go to work to just make a living, we go to work for our Father.

In these challenging times, it’s tempting to insulate ourselves from our call to join our elder brother in the advancing of God’s Kingdom. Joining him in this labor is a great act of faith. We step out into a darkening world rather than shut ourselves from the pain and discomfort around us.



But we are not alone. Together, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we choose to be a people who shine into our workplaces with the transforming light of Jesus Christ.

This is our purpose, our labor in WorkLight wherever we work or are. We’ve joined together to be good and faithful coworkers in the bringing forth of his Kingdom and to do it with faith, integrity, and excellence. We are his field, his building.

March Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

# Work that Brings Joy

By Brian Dahl

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)*

I've spent my career in marketing communications. I am grateful for both the work and people I've worked alongside over the years. But as a Christ follower, I've struggled at times to see it as God's work. Helping companies sell more of their products and services can sometimes feel insignificant.

But the Bible teaches us that God not only values our work—he prepares each person for specific work. And he calls that work “good.” Imagine that! God's intimate knowledge of you, as your creator, led him to design work that you are uniquely equipped to do! (Psalm 139)

The inherent joy from doing work that is ordained by God stands apart when

you see it lived out in one's profession. Olympic gold medalist Eric Liddell, depicted in the hit movie *Chariots of Fire*, famously said, “God made me fast. And when I run, I feel his pleasure.”

Too often we lose this godly perspective on our work—and our joy is snuffed out. Difficulty creeps in through envy, power struggles, personality conflicts, unethical dealings, and many other expressions of our sinful nature as human beings.

When work gets hard, which it does, we have a choice as Christ followers. Rather than making the work or others the object of our discontent, we need to look inward and remember that we are called to work for our Father.

The type of work we are each called to do is less important than the way we do the work. Remember it is God who made you. He has prepared specific work just for you. And he calls you to faithfully serve and honor him in your work.

In this striving, our labor takes on beauty. God does an inner work of transforming us into his image. And in the process of it all, we take part in the joy of building his Kingdom together.

*Brian Dahl is a partner at DKY, a brand marketing agency in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is also a WorkLight board member, and the DKY team supports WorkLight marketing communications needs.*

### PRAY

*Lord, show me the unique abilities you've given me, and how I can use these abilities to honor you through work.*

### REFLECT

*What circumstance am I struggling with today at work? What is God asking me to do to overcome that circumstance and honor him?*

### DISCUSS

*Share with a sister/brother in Christ the unique talents you see in them and encourage one another to use those talents to honor God at work.*



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## REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

## ROI

By Jim Ganther

*“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered in sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table.” (Luke 16:19–21)*

When I think of stewardship, the above scripture isn’t the first to come to mind. Rather, I think of the parable of the talents. It is straightforward: a master invests in his servants; two make money, one does not. It is easy to interpret that parable literally, especially when commerce is considered our primary mission field. Return on Investment (ROI) is a familiar concept.

While ROI is important, increasing the Kingdom’s yield is more

important, and more the point Jesus was trying to make.

The above scripture speaks of stewardship as well, but from a different angle. The rich man clearly had strong ROI—he wore designer clothes and feasted daily. I imagine he tracked every shekel and even tithed his wealth down to the mint and dill and cumin. Yet he wound up in Hades.

Lazarus, on the other hand, had no visible ROI. In the eyes of the rich man he was a drag on earnings, and therefore easily dismissed. Yet Lazarus was “carried to Abraham’s side.”

In God’s eyes, Lazarus was a strong earner, for he put an opportunity to serve him in front of the man most able to respond to that need and having the greatest need to do so. Lazarus put all he had—his poverty and his infirmity—in humble service to God. His needs were gold for eternity generously laid before those who could see the treasure for what it was. Lazarus was a good and faithful servant. Can the same be said of me?

In retrospect it is clear how God’s hand in my early training provided the framework to understand the technical complexities of insurance coverage. I frequently find myself “interpreting” the language of these policies into basic English, without slipping into “insurance speak.” I try to sit on the same side of the table as the client, and assume that I am walking in their shoes. A big part of my job is to help clients understand which options can provide the best coverage at the most reasonable premium cost.

It would be foolish not to want my clients’ businesses to prosper. So, if I can provide a valued service using the skills and training our loving God has provided, this is a win-win.

I am regularly grateful for the work our Lord has provided me with over all these years. In our warp speed and demand for things now world, I have the opportunity to be a steward in his creation through my work.

*Jim Ganther is an attorney, entrepreneur, and captain of a competitive BBQ team. He and his wife, Melissa, have seven children. Contact Jim at [jganther@MosaicCS.com](mailto:jganther@MosaicCS.com).*

## PRAY

*Lord, grant me the grace to see your treasure in the needs of others, for their good and my salvation.*

## REFLECT

*Are there people in my life I see as unimportant because of their circumstances or appearance?*

## DISCUSS

*In business, we invest resources to chase ROI. How can we invest in a manner that increases return to the Kingdom?*

## REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

## Be an Interpreter

By Mark O’Bryan

*Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them. (Romans 12:6)*

For many years, I have been a broker for worker’s compensation insurance. My early work background included training with the Workers Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau (a regulatory agency in California) and stints with workers compensation carriers.

When we moved our family from Los Angeles to the central coast of California, that meant changing insurance careers to become a frontline commercial insurance agent. I balked at this, and my wife advised me to “go be the best agent and help clients with your expertise.” That was 33 years ago.

*Mark O’Bryan is a grateful husband, doting father/grandfather, church cantor, senior softball player, and active commercial insurance broker.*

## PRAY

*Thank you Lord for the many opportunities you shower upon us in the work you have provided. We seek your constant anointings and power to do the work honestly and forthrightly.*

## REFLECT

*How does your work provide you with the opportunity to be an interpreter of complex topics to your co-workers or clients?*

## DISCUSS

*In what ways does your job allow you to help and inform co-workers and clients? Do others rely upon you for well-reasoned advice in your line of work?*

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

# God the Curegiver

By Laurie Primavera

*I lift my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)*

When I worked as a hospice nurse, I was God’s hands and feet, even though I was keenly aware that only God can cure someone physically, emotionally, and/or spiritually. I often felt I was on holy ground as a caregiver while God was the “curegiver.”

I witnessed many patients die alone, suffering, and in pain. In our society, we often avoid a dying person. Human contact often decreases due to our own fear of death. But by listening, loving, and treating patients with dignity and respect, the caregiving work allowed me to be Christ to those in my care.

Hospice workers walk alongside dying patients and their families, not allowing them to die alone nor leave the family bereft and hopeless. We listen to the patients’ fears and concerns as they face their deaths. Our stewardship offers a meaningful presence as we provide comfort to relieve suffering.

My faith allowed me to witness many holy moments as God worked by drawing both believers and non-believers a little closer to him. We rarely witnessed bedside conversions for those who had no faith in God; however, many of our patients had faith that was lukewarm. God’s curative powers restored faith, even to those who had the faith of a mustard seed.

Today, I work in a Stephen Ministry program. We provide one-on-one Christian caring to anyone feeling lonely, facing loss of some kind, and those who may be anxious or depressed.

We are not fixers. God is the great fixer. Once again, God is the curegiver; we are the caregivers. The Holy Spirit resides within us; guides our

caregiving and reminds us always that God is the great healer.

*Laurie Primavera has been a nurse and health care leader for the last 30 years, overseeing outpatient programs such as hospice and home health. She currently coordinates a Stephen Ministry program at her church.*

**PRAY**

*Lord, you are our refuge and strength in our lives. Reveal your plans for us in the workplace, as we rely always on your caregiving presence in all matters.*

**REFLECT**

*How does God use you to be a caregiver in the workplace?*

**DISCUSS**

*How do we trust God to be the curegiver in our own lives and the lives of others we touch?*

PRESIDENT’S NOTE



*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters. (Galatians 2:23)*

**Good, Faithful, But Imperfect Stewards**

The role of human beings as stewards of creation starts early in scripture and weaves through history as an invitation to sacred responsibility, purpose, and meaning. In Genesis the Hebrew term “al bayith” can refer to the caretaker of a household. As followers of Christ we are entrusted to oversee God’s countless precious gifts in all their abundance and variety.

We are all overseers in one way or another. Some of us have a family.

Most of us have at least one job, whether paid or volunteer. A few of us own companies or run businesses. All of us have been tasked with the responsibility of our own body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

How can one accept the invitation to be a steward of God while knowing we fail to meet God’s standards? The answer is as concise as it is transformative: Jesus Christ.

We are not only saved for all of eternity by the blood of Jesus. We are also invited into the present moment to bear witness, glorify, and worship God. When we are attentive and faithful, the Holy Spirit is with us in our stewardship.

If it is grace that provides us the opportunity to live as stewards, then it is mercy that keeps the invitation

alive. Our calling is to build God’s Kingdom in the workplace. Some of us may get better at serving the Lord over the course of a lifetime, but none of us does it perfectly. We don’t have to. Jesus already did that for us.

God willing, we will avoid the discouraging trap of perfection and seek to be good and faithful throughout our lives. What might be your next step forward to take in stewardship? Perhaps you are ready to break your bondage of a pattern of greed, anger, or arrogance. Or maybe it’s time for you to step into a role that will challenge you to grow, repent, and find a new form of stewardship. Come Holy Spirit!

With you in Christ,

Wes

# Patiently Steadfast

By Nancy Huddleston

A new term has entered the lexicon of the business world—quiet quitting. This follows on the heels of the “great resignation.” Both trends are related to employees leaving their jobs in one form or another.

So, what’s going on?

Both are temptations to abandon the call to work for our Father. But if we turn away from these trends and use the power of the Holy Spirit, we have a unique opportunity to adjust our sails by shining our lights brighter. When we feel engaged in our work with Jesus by our side, we start each day with a greater purpose, and in an altruistic sense, to change the world. The Holy Spirit leads us in this endeavor because sometimes the most impactful moments at work don’t have anything to do with our job descriptions; rather, they have everything to do with building God’s Kingdom.

I worked as a journalist for most of my career, and the best part of my job was telling the stories of people I encountered while I worked in the community. These were people I met covering meetings, writing human-interest articles, and reporting on crimes and unusual incidents.

One such event involved getting a call from a mother who said her daughter lived in California and had been attacked by a cougar when she was biking on a trail with a friend. The daughter should have died, but she attributed her survival to the strength she received from God at that terrible moment in her life. Her

story was amazing and I focused on her faith when I wrote the article. Moreover, the option to leave the faith aspect out of her story never occurred to me because of my training as a journalist to let the story tell itself.

When the story was published, a coworker was very offended by the “God angle,” as he put it, and made his feelings known to me in an aggressive manner. As the editor, as well as a writer at a small weekly community newspaper, I listened to his concerns. I shared with him why the faith aspect was important and as the hometown newspaper, we owed it to our readers to tell “the rest of the story,” as Paul Harvey famously said.

In the end, he took his complaint to the publisher, and I got the dreaded “can you come into my office” call. When I arrived, I found my coworker standing there with his arms crossed and a smug look on his face. After the publisher facilitated a conversation to hear both sides, I expected a reprimand. Instead, she turned to him and asked: “How do you know this woman’s faith didn’t save her?”

The light of the Holy Spirit often shines the brightest when our work is the hardest and when we work for the Father, amazing opportunities are always on the horizon. In Luke 11:34-35, we are reminded that our eyes are the lamp of our bodies and “when your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. ... See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness.”

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## Using Our Gifts

*Continued from page 1*

academic improvement. Today, after 12 years, some of the adult mentors and children are still connected and consider each other family members.

More recently, Lucy was inspired by the Holy Spirit to launch the WorkLight, then known as Christians in Commerce, women’s chapter in Fresno, California. In cooperation with the Service Council, Lucy has worked diligently over the past nine years to build this chapter of faith-filled women who serve Jesus Christ in many diverse ways. “We as his women disciples have accepted Jesus’ ‘Great Commission’ wholeheartedly to transform our homes and our sphere of influence according to his will and his purpose.”

She continues: “WorkLight has given me the tools to grow in the Lord Jesus Christ, to be equipped by the Holy Spirit through his gifts to overcome the pressure and trials of this life, and to become and reflect Jesus Christ.

“WorkLight has been the catalyst for my boldness when praying with a stranger that I might meet in my daily walk of life,” she continued, “By playing an active Christian role in the body of Christ, I can bring about the change that God commanded us in Matthew 28:16-20. WorkLight reminds me that I am the face, hands, and feet of Jesus. No matter where I am, it is up to me as his disciple to reflect his love to everyone near me.”

*Carol Lopez is a retired educator and serves as the secretary of the Fresno, California, WorkLight Women’s Chapter Service Council. She also volunteers as a Stephen Minister for her parish church.*



## Overcoming the Toil of Work

God still wants his creation to fulfill his purpose. It was made that all might flourish; a fallen and broken world just makes the job harder.

A Gallup study showed that only 30% of people are actually engaged with their work, 50% are disengaged, and almost 20% hate their jobs. That means that 70% of working people spend half of their waking hours in jobs they don't enjoy, aren't fully engaged in, or worse, despise.

Most experience work, not as a gift from God, but as a hard, depressing, grinding toil. Monday isn't something they look forward to. As Christians this is particularly sad. God has something better in mind.

In our time, while toil can't be separated from work, toil and work are distinct from each other. Focusing on working for our Father is key. This enables the good of work to minimize

the toil of work. It makes a difference in our lives and the lives of others.

Unfortunately, the survey shows people, including Christians, more often choose two other alternative, unhealthy strategies to cope with the toil of work. The strategies? We "work to live" or we "live to work."

### Work to Live

Most disengage and choose to work to live. Work becomes a means to an end, not a constructive part of the Father's plan. As a result, we live a divided life. We compartmentalize our life.

We disengage. We under commit; it's only a means to our own bigger interests and desires. We put in our time while looking forward to the other things we would much rather do. We don't give it our best.

We end up resenting work as an intrusion on our time and life. We

disconnect our work from its created purpose; we certainly don't see it as a place where we show our faithfulness and obedience to God. Where we can serve God and others.

### Live to Work

The other strategy is we live to work. We expect work to give us personal validation, identity, and meaning.

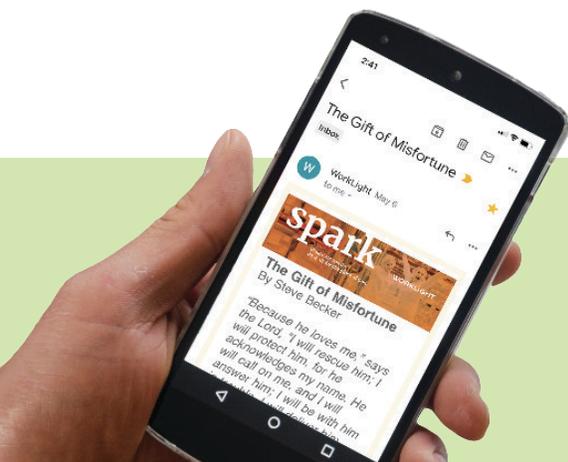
But jobs and occupations are unable to answer these questions. They are not equipped for the task. We're asking them to give us something they can't deliver. As a result, we over commit, we sacrifice in other areas, and only come away frustrated. We're often overworked.

Our validation, identity, and meaning can only be found in Jesus Christ. In Christ, we bring our God-given meaning and identity to our workplaces. As Christians we're called to restore the good of work and offset the toil of work.

### Working for Our Father

Working for our Father puts life in the right order. We engage and bring our service and devotion to God and to work. We leave a divided and compartmentalized life behind. We become active influencers in the culture of our workplaces. We begin to live a life of integrity. It's a life that's conscientious and honors our Creator while resisting the "idols" of the world that cause us to compromise our devotion to God at work.

*Edited from Working for Our Father video series available at [worklight.org/resources](http://worklight.org/resources).*



## FORWARD ➤➤ a spark

If a Spark Reflection reminds you of someone, that's a Holy Spirit nudge. Forward it on and ignite a movement of the Holy Spirit in their life.

## NEWS

**THANK YOU,  
VANESSA COOREMAN SMITH!**

A special thank you to Vanessa, who will be stepping off the WorkLight Board after serving as a board member and on our Communications Committee. Do you feel a call to take her place? We are actively looking for brothers and sisters in Christ with board experience to serve. Right now, there is a particular prayer for new members to join our Finance, Governance, and Fundraising committees. Let us know if you, or someone you know, has the gifts, experience, and calling to be a part of this ministry's leadership.

**HOW MANY CHATS DOES IT TAKE  
TO GET TO THE IGNITION CENTER  
OF AN IGNITER?**

Many longtime Christians in Commerce re-igniters have asked, "How many times do I need to ask an igniter before they will come on a Challenge Weekend?" Not a bad question; but it's more about the relationship than the invitation. Igniters are going to say "yes" to someone they have learned to trust over time. Be patient and kind. Pick up the tab for lunch if you're able. Be willing to call again even if you didn't get a response last time. If you are called to initiate and maintain such a re-igniter + igniter relationship, then pray that it becomes a space for the Holy Spirit to move in both your lives.

**JOHN MOONEY MEMORIAL  
CAMPAIGN AND FOUNDERS  
IGNITER FUND**

As announced at the 2022 National Challenge Weekend, the John Mooney Memorial Campaign is over 25% toward the goal of raising \$200,000 to reach the next generation with this movement of the Holy Spirit. We are praying for a small number of donors to feel the call to make transformative gifts. All resources will become part of WorkLight's Founders Igniter Fund as we seek to hire an additional staff person and reach 500 igniters by 2025.

**HOW DID YOU BECOME A PART OF  
WORKLIGHT?**

Do you have a story about how God led you to be a part of CIC and/or WorkLight? Sharing your story could help others to be inspired, entertained, or encouraged. Or maybe it's just a fun story to tell. Let us know at [communications@worklight.org](mailto:communications@worklight.org).

**WORKLIGHT REMOTE SMALL GROUP**

Every Tuesday from 9:00-11:00 a.m. Pacific time, brothers in Christ gather via Zoom for our weekly WorkLight Remote Small Group. Everyone is welcome, from re-igniters to igniters. Contact [bryan@worklight.org](mailto:bryan@worklight.org) for meeting details.

**WEEKLY PRAYER CALLS**

Looking to start and/or end your workweek with Jesus? Join us on Mondays at 7:15 a.m. Pacific time and Fridays at 8:30 a.m. Pacific time for 15 minutes of prayer at 612-699-2818. No passcode required.

**UPCOMING CHALLENGE WEEKENDS****Palm Desert Men's and Women's Chapters**

- March 10-11 at Sacred Heart Church in Palm Desert, California

**Monterey Men's Chapter**

- March 24-26 at Mission San Antonio de Padua, Jolon, California

**Salinas/Santa Cruz Men's Chapters**

- April 28-30 at Mission San Antonio de Padua, Jolon, California

**Fresno Women's Chapter**

- April 28-30 at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Three Rivers, California

**Minneapolis-St. Paul Men's Chapter**

- May 5-7 at Dunrovin Retreat Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

**West Phoenix Co-Ed Chapter**

- May 6-7 at St. Helen's Catholic Church, Glendale, Arizona

Check out these events and more at <https://worklight.org/events/>.

WORKLIGHT

**CHALLENGE WEEKEND**

"The night is over, the day is almost here." Romans 13:12

*Awake  
the Dawn.*

*Host a  
Weekend.*

Free from pandemic restrictions, 2023 is our year for Challenge Weekends. Our National Conference introduced a new look and new resources. Schedule a weekend now so a new generation in your area can experience its power.

Learn more at [WorkLight.org/Challenge-Weekends](https://WorkLight.org/Challenge-Weekends)



# 2023

## MARCH

*"I have been crucified  
with Christ and I no  
longer live, but Christ  
lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

## THE FLAME

### WORKLIGHT PRAYER

Father,

*Fill us with your Holy Spirit  
that we may be made new  
and bring the presence of Christ into all we do;  
That we may grow in love for you, and for all;  
That we may be humble and wise stewards of your creation;  
That we may bring your light into our workplaces;  
That we may lead all to unity in you;  
Through Jesus, our Lord.*

Amen

**VISION** Being Christ in the workplace

**MISSION** To encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence

**VALUES** Christians in Commerce (DBA WorkLight) is an ecumenical organization committed to:

- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

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